

## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES

April 15, 2009 – 3:00 P.M.

Pre-Council Chambers, Mobile Government Plaza, 205 Government Street

### A. CALL TO ORDER

1. The Chair, Bunky Ralph, called the meeting to order at 3:04. Carlos Gant, Kim Harden, Tom Karwinski, Bradford Ladd, Harris Oswald, Craig Roberts, Jim Wagoner, and Janetta Whitt-Mitchell were in attendance.
2. Ms. Ralph held over approval of the March 18, 2009 minutes until the May 6, 2009 meeting.
3. Ms. Whitt-Mitchell moved to approve the Mid Month COAs granted by Staff.

### B. MID MONTH APPROVALS: APPROVED

#### 1. Applicant: Stauter Construction

- a. Property Address: 1004 Government St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/26/09
- c. Project: Repair crown molding on cornice in front of house; repair gap where beam goes into wall on driveway side of house; repair gap beneath, pull board and chalk – all repairs to match existing in profile, dimension and material; paint repairs to match existing.

#### 2. Applicant: J. DeWayne Gardener

- a. Property Address: 29 Lee St.
- b. Date of Approval: 04/01/09
- c. Project: Repair/replace siding as needed to match existing in profile, dimension and material; paint house Benjamin Moore following colors: body, Windham Cream; trim, white; porch, black.

#### 3. Applicant: Paul Porto

- a. Property Address: 102 S. Lafayette St. A.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/27/09
- c. Project: Reroof with charcoal/black shingles; replace rotten wood as needed.

#### 4. Applicant: Wayne Dean

- a. Property Address: 1064 Palmetto St.
- b. Date of Approval: 04/01/09
- c. Project: Repaint house and fence per existing color scheme; repair any rotten wood to match in kind.

#### 5. Applicant: Chris Bowen

- a. Property Address: 102 South Lafayette St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/31/09
- c. Project: Repaint per existing color scheme (blue with white trim); repair rotten wood as necessary; remove plastic awnings; repair privacy fence.

#### 6. Applicant: Marion Everett

- a. Property Address: 1409 Campbell St.
- b. Date of Approval: 03/20/09
- c. Project: Repair and Replace banister to match existing in profile, dimension and material; replace rotten wooden board on rear and side elevations matching existing in profile, dimension and material; paint all repairs to match existing color scheme; paint shutters green black.

#### 7. Applicant: Pope Building LLC

- a. Property Address: 501 Government St.

- b. Date of Approval: 03/02/09
- c. Project: Install treated 6' tall privacy fence at rear of driveway along chain link fence on west side of property; dog-ear board will be used to match existing fence.

**8. Applicant: Jeff Florey for John Peebles**

- a. Property Address: 805 Church St.
- b. Date of Approval: 04/02/09
- c. Project: Repaint metal building dark brown; paint front balcony to match building; Remove curb cut and landscape according to zoning ordinance; install door and windows on north and west elevations per submitted plans; install patriot fence per submitted plan.

**9. Applicant: Madeline Nelson**

- a. Property Address: 259 Michigan Avenue.
- b. Date of Approval: 04/07/09
- c. Project: Repaint per existing color scheme (yellow with green trim).

**C. APPLICATIONS**

- 1. 032-09: 56 Semmes Avenue.
  - a. Applicant: Monty Gilbert
  - b. Project: Remove later porch stoop and cast iron posts; Replace existing porch and posts with a wood decked porch and wooden posts.  
**APPROVED AS AMENDED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.**
- 2. 033-09: 114 St. Emanuel St.
  - a. Applicant: Nicholas Holmes, Jr. for Christ Church Cathedral.
  - b. Project: Stucco and add wall piers to existing fence; Construct fountain; Add lanterns; Pave walkways  
**APPROVED AS AMENDED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.**
- 3. 034-09: 251 Government St.
  - a. Applicant: Greg Dickinson
  - b. Project: Construct a new canopy on Government St. Façade; Fence Approval.  
**APPROVED IN PART. DENIED IN PART. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.**
- 4. 035-09: 251 Dauphin St.
  - a. Applicant: Corey Fogarty
  - b. Project: Sign Approval.  
**APPROVED. CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED.**

**D. OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1. Guidelines were discussed. The Board made minor changes to the on going Staff Revisions to the Guidelines for Alterations and Additions to Existing Buildings. Staff will continue to work on the Guidelines and post for public comment over the summer.
- 2. No further discussion ensued. The meeting dismissed at 5:20 p.m.

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**  
**CERTIFIED RECORD**

**032-09-CA:** 56 Semmes Avenue  
**Applicant:** Monty Gilbert  
**Received:** 03/20/09  
**Meeting:** 04/04/09

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

Historic District: Old Dauphin Way  
Classification: Contributing Property  
Zoning: R-1  
Project: Porch Reconstruction.

**BUILDING HISTORY**

This cross-gabled Queen Anne cottage has a front facing bay windowed wing and a recessed porch. Houses of this type were constructed across the South in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 9 of the Preservation Ordinance states “the Board shall not approve any application proposing a Material Change in Appearance unless it finds the change...will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building, the buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity, or the general visual character of the district...”

**STAFF REPORT**

- A. This house’s porch deck was removed in the 1950s or 1960s. The columns were replaced by decorative iron posts. Other changes impairing the historic character of the house occurred contemporaneously. The owner/applicant recently received a COA to paint the house. He proposes to make other changes that would recapture the building’s architectural integrity.
- B. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation state in pertinent part:
  - 1. “Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.”

The Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s historic districts state in pertinent part:

- 2. “The porch is an important regional characteristic of Mobile’s architecture.”
  - 3. “Particular attention should be paid to the handrails, lower rails, balusters, decking, posts/columns, proportions, and decorative details.”
  - 4. “A building’s base, or foundation, gives the building a sense of strength and solidity, and serves to tie the structure to the ground. Traditionally, residential buildings were raised on piers.
  - 5. Foundation screening should be recessed from the front of the foundation piers. Lattice, if used, should be hung below the skirt board or siding, between the piers and framed with trim. Lattice if secured to the face of the buildings should be recessed and screened.”
  - 6. “The form and shape of the porch and its roof should maintain their historic appearance. The materials should blend with the style of the building.”
- C. Scope of Work:
    - 1. Remove existing brick stoop
    - 2. Replace stoop with porch deck measuring 25’ in length and 6’ in depth
      - a. Brick foundation piers to support porch deck

- b. Wood lattice to be suspended and framed between foundation piers
- c. Tongue and Groove wood decking to cover porch floor
- d. 6 ¼ ' by 6 ¼ ' wood posts to support porch roof
- e. wood balustrade to encircle porch

D. Clarification

- 1. Porch columns
- 2. Use of MHDC-approved balustrade

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

Porches are one of the defining architectural elements of Mobile's historic districts. Their reconstruction is encouraged. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards state that the replacement of any non extant fabric must be based on documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Staff has consulted with the applicant. He submitted two proposals. In the second proposal presented here, the applicant followed Staff's suggestion by using brick foundation piers instead of the wooden pilings he initially submitted.

The applicant has requested approval to install box columns; however, this house most likely originally featured a Victorian turned wood post. Staff recommends that the applicant use 53 Semmes Avenue, a sister house of 56 Semmes Avenue, as guide for his reconstruction. In order to reconstruct an appropriate porch railing, the applicant has been provided with the design for the MHDC-approved balustrade. Thus, Staff recommends approval provided the applicant install Victorian turned wood posts and the MHDC stock balustrade.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Monty Gilbert was present to discuss the application. Mr. Gilbert informed the Board that he investigated Staff's recommendations. He found turned posts more costly than the proposed boxed posts. Mr. Gilbert asked if square posts were an option. Mr. Gilbert agreed to the turned posts; however, retained the option to install either square or turned balusters after consulting with the Banner and Shield Marking Committee.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

The board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Mr. Karwinski asked Mr. Gilbert how he determined the dimensions of the proposed boxed posts. He and Ms. Harden informed the applicant that the porch probably had either turned or chamfered posts before its removal. Mr. Roberts gave the applicant the contact information of a company which manufactures turned posts. Ms. Ralph informed the applicant that the Banner and Shield Marking Committee would likely prefer turned posts as well as turned balusters.

**FINDING OF FACT**

Mr. Roberts moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report, amending facts 2 (d) requiring turned posts and 2 (e) requiring square or round pickets, both to be approved by Staff.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

**DECISION ON THE APPLICATION**

Mr. Roberts moved that, based upon the facts as amended by the Board, the application does not impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued.

**Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 4/15/10**

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**  
**CERTIFIED RECORD**

**033-09-CA:** 114 St. Emanuel Street; Christ Church Cathedral  
**Applicant:** Nicholas Holmes, II  
**Received:** 03/26/09  
**Meeting:** 04/15/09

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

Historic District: Church Street East  
Classification: Contributing  
Zoning: B-4  
Project: Construct Stucco Fence around Landscaped Garden.

**BUILDING HISTORY**

The building is one of the most significant structures in the City. Built between 1838-1840, the church reflects the influence of the mature Greek Revival style. The building suffered severe damage in the 1906 hurricane. The exterior restoration and reconstruction were carried out in a manner in keeping with original design.

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 9 of the Preservation Ordinance states “the Board shall not approve any application proposing a Material Change in Appearance unless it finds the change...will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building, the buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity, or the general visual character of the district...”

**STAFF REPORT**

- A. Christ Church Cathedral is currently undergoing renovation. In June, 2008, the Board approved a new porch for the sanctuary’s north elevation. This present application addresses the existing brick wall enclosing the garden, landscaping and lighting for this area, adjacent to the north elevation of Christ Church and visible from the St. Emanuel Street.
- B. The Design Review Guidelines for Mobile’s Historic Districts state in pertinent part:
  - 1. Fences “should complement the building and not detract from it. Design, scale, placement, and materials should be considered along with their relationship to the Historic District.
  - 2. Modern paving materials are acceptable in the historic districts. However, it is important that the design, location and materials be compatible with the property.”
  - 3. Where lighting impacts the exterior appearance of a building or the district in which the building is located, it shall be reviewed for appropriateness as any other element.”
- C. Scope of Work:
  - 1. Alterations to existing modern brick wall per submitted plan:
    - A. Stucco interior of south wall
    - B. Add 2’8”-wide pilasters and 4” cap, per detailed drawing
    - C. Construct a fountain on garden side of south wall
    - D. detail wall above proposed fountain (as demonstrated by plan)
  - 2. Add a gas lantern to right of garden entry
  - 3. Pave 12’1” by 7’3” space off east entrance to garden
  - 4. Pave approximately 5’ walkways per submitted plan

D. Clarifications

1. Drawings or Photographs of Lantern
2. Drawings or Photographs of Fountain
3. Paving Material

**Staff Analysis**

The existing, exposed brick wall is constructed of modern brick. Therefore, the proposed alterations to the wall are more compatible with historic church than the existing wall. The projecting piers and stuccoed surface visually reference the church's north elevation. Upon clarification of the lantern, fountain, and paving, Staff recommends approval.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Mr. Nicholas Holmes, II was present to discuss the application. Mr. Holmes addressed the Staff Clarifications by distributing a supplemental to his application. The supplemental indicated that the applicant proposes to use the same type lantern the Board approved at its September 3, 2008 meeting. The supplemental also stated that there was no immediate plan to install a fountain. The applicant elaborated saying that if or when a plan arises, he would submit an additional application. Mr. Holmes then pointed to the final portion of the supplemental which indicated the paving material as Block USA "American Cobble." The applicant stated they intend to stucco the northern, raised portion of the wall, visible from the right of way, and will consult the county on any other treatments to the wall.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

The board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Mr. Roberts asked if the twelve foot extension over the proposed fountain site was approvable. Ms. Ralph explained to the Board and the applicant that the Board can approve eight foot sections of fences, but any fencing exceeding eight feet requires approval from the Board of Adjustment. Given the scale of the Church and the County Courthouse, a wall exceeding the eight foot limit did not impair the architectural integrity of the site or district.

**FINDING OF FACT**

Mr. Roberts moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report as amended, deleting C (1) C and pending the approval of C (1) D by the Board of Adjustment.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

**DECISION ON THE APPLICATION**

Mr. Roberts moved that, based upon the facts as amended by the Board, the application does not impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued conditional on the Board of Adjustment approval for the wall.

**Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 4/15/10**





**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**  
**CERTIFIED RECORD ATTACHED**

**034-09-CA: 251 Government Street**  
**Applicant: Greg Dickinson**  
**Received: 03/27/09**  
**Meeting: 04/15/09**

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

Historic District: Church Street East  
Classification: Non-Contributing  
Zoning: B-4  
Project: Construct a new Canopy on Government Street Façade.

**BUILDING HISTORY**

The twelve-story masonry building opened in 1940 as the Admiral Semmes Manor hotel. It is currently part of the Radisson chain of mid to high range business and leisure hotels.

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 9 of the Preservation Ordinance states “the Board shall not approve any application proposing a Material Change in Appearance unless it finds the change...will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building, the buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity, or the general visual character of the district...”

**STAFF REPORT**

- A. The Admiral Semmes seeks to update its existing façade and perform regular maintenance work.
- B. The Design Guidelines for Mobile’s downtown commercial buildings, state, in pertinent part:
  - 1. “The way in which color is applied as a design element is important to the overall appearance of the building. Use color schemes that may be typical of the period and/or blend with adjacent buildings”
  - 2. Awnings with historic profiles should be used. Operable or fixed awnings are acceptable. Fit the awning to the dimensions
  - 3. Sign materials should complement the facade materials of buildings. Simple designs are most effective and encouraged. Painted wood, fabric and metal are encouraged. Internally lighted plastic signs are not allowed. Sign sizes are limited to 1.5 square feet per linear front foot of building, with a 64 square foot maximum.”
- C. Scope of Work:
  - 1. Replace awnings
    - a. New canvas and logos per submitted sample
      - 1. to be brought to meeting
    - b. awnings will be charcoal gray
    - c. awning over front door will be extended 3’ for a total of 8’ x 37’
    - d. awning over side entrance will be extended 2’
    - e. existing angled canopies at northeast corner will not be replaced
  - 2. Replace lanterns with lanterns to match those in front of Government Plaza
    - a. Fix banner with logo on the street lights
  - 3. Add banners with logo to balconies
  - 4. Replace pavers as needed so that all match and are no longer slick

- a. Sample of any new pavers will be submitted, if necessary
- 5. Maintenance approved by Staff
  - a. Caulk windows and doors
  - b. Paint balcony support and canopy supports charcoal gray
  - c. Paint windows, doors and frames light gray
  - d. Remove all angled awning and flashing on Joachim Street
- 6. Landscaping approved by Staff
  - a. Remove wooden border around 3 trees
  - b. Replace with large Canyon Rose stone border
  - c. Add 2' x 2' polished brass planters at front entrance
- D. Clarifications needed
  - 1. Type of awning material
  - 2. Type and color of pavers if necessary
  - 3. Sample and size of banners

**Staff Analysis**

Upon consideration and discussion of the awning sample, Staff recommends approval of C (1) pending corroboration with the right of way. Staff recommends approval of the replacement of the lanterns; however, staff needs the dimensions and a sample of the banner to determine whether or not this counts as additional signage. Under the guidelines, buildings are limited to a total of 64 sq. ft. of signage; however, given the size of the Admiral Semmes, the hotel has a variance from the 64 sq. ft. limitation. Staff will calculate the existing signage on the building prior to the ARB meeting which will bear on whether C(2) and C(3) are appropriate.

Staff recommends approval of C(4) once a sample is considered. Staff has approved items C (4) and C(5) on a mid month basis and will include these items in the complete COA.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

The applicant was not present to discuss the application.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

The Board discussed the removal and replacement of existing canopies. The extension of canopies raised concern. Staff informed the Board that truck traffic on Joachim Street damages other awnings and canopies. Ms. Whitt-Mitchell agreed with Staff's observation regarding problematic truck clearance. Mr. Roberts asked if the proposed stone landscape borders were approvable. He also asked if there was a process by which individuals or groups could replace the city's light posts with lighting of their own choosing. Other Board members questioned the addition of logos on the proposed street lights. The Board found the application lacking in crucial information, including the design and size of the banners and the type of stone border around the planters.

**FINDING OF FACT**

Jim Wagoner moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report, deleting C (2) a and C (3) for lack of information, amending C (4) to require any replacement of the pavers to match existing, and deleting C (6)(a) and (b) for lack of information.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

#### **DECISION ON THE APPLICATION**

Mr. Wagoner moved that, based upon the facts as amended by the Board, the application does not impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued for the following: awning replacement, lantern replacement to match other city lanterns, paver replacement to match existing, maintenance and repainting work and installation of the planters; all other work to be denied for lack of information.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

**Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 4/15/10**

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**  
**STAFF COMMENTS**

**035-15-CA:** 251 Dauphin Street  
**Applicant:** Corey Fogarty  
**Received:** 03/7/09  
**Meeting:** 04/15/09

**INTRODUCTION TO THE APPLICATION**

Historic District: Lower Dauphin Street  
Classification: Non-contributing  
Zoning: B-1  
Project: Sign Approval.

**BUILDING HISTORY**

This commercial building dates from 1965. The asymmetry of the elevations, the volumetric nature of structure, and the avoidance of historical ornament make this building one of Mobile's finest examples of the 1950/1960s Modern International Style.

**STANDARD OF REVIEW**

Section 9 of the Preservation Ordinance states "the Board shall not approve any application proposing a Material Change in Appearance unless it finds the change...will not materially impair the architectural or historic value of the building, the buildings on adjacent sites or in the immediate vicinity, or the general visual character of the district..."

**STAFF REPORT**

- A. This is the fifth signage proposal for this building to be reviewed by the Board in past sixteen years. The current applicants are opening a new bar/restaurant in the facility. They propose facing the existing sign with one advertising their establishment.
- B. The Sign Design Guidelines for Mobile's Historic Districts and Government Street, state, in pertinent part:
  - 1. Signs shall be mounted or erected so they do not obscure the architectural features or openings of a building.
  - 2. The overall design of all signage including the mounting framework shall relate to the design of the principal building on the property. Buildings with a recognizable style such as Greek Revival, Italianate, Victorian, Queen Anne, Neo-classic, Craftsman, et al., should use signage of the same style. This can be done through the use of similar decorative features such as columns or brackets.
  - 3. The size of the sign shall be in proportion to the building and the neighboring structures and signs.
  - 4. The total maximum allowable sign area for all signs is one and one half square feet per linear front foot of the principal building, not to exceed 64 square feet. A multi-tenant building is also limited to a maximum of 64 square feet.
- C. Scope of Work:
  - 1. Mount a wood and vinyl double faced sign over existing sign per the submitted plans.
  - 2. The sign will not be lit.
  - 3. The sign will fit within the original frame.

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

The proposed sign does not exceed the maximum square footage allowed for signage. The design poses no impairment to the historical or architectural character of the building. Staff recommends approval.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Melissa Beachamp and Fred Renfrey were present to discuss the application. They explained that the existing sign would be encased in wood then covered in vinyl.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

The board discussion took place concurrently with the public testimony. Citing the original configuration and illumination of the existing sign, Mr. Roberts mentioned that neon signage was integral part of 1960s streetscapes. He stated that he found the proposed sign's design out of spirit with the building's modern style design. Mr. Wagoner and Mr. Ladd asked the applicants about if the proposed sign utilized illumination. Ms. Beachamp informed the Board the proposed sign will not be illuminated.

### **FINDING OF FACT**

Tom Karwinski moved that, based upon the evidence presented in the application and during the public testimony, the Board finds the facts in the Staff report, adding fact C(3) to state that the sign will fit precisely into the face of the existing sign.

The motion received a second and was unanimously approved.

### **DECISION ON THE APPLICATION**

Mr. Wagoner moved that, based upon the facts as amended by the Board, the application does not impair the historic integrity of the district or the building and that a Certificate of Appropriateness be issued. Mr. Roberts abstained.

**Certificate of Appropriateness Expiration Date: 4/15/10**